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ABSTRACT

This report provides an edited transcript of discussions at the symposium, "An Inside Look at the Broadcasting Industry," which focused on the status of women in broadcasting and the effects of affirmative action on hiring and promotions. Panelists for the symposium were the 28 winners of 1984 Broadcast Awards presented by the National Commission on Working Women, and audience participants included heads of women's organizations, representatives from corporations, labor unions, education and public interest groups, and broadcasters. The general topics discussed included employment, programming, and funding, with special attention given to the lack of women radio talk show hosts, weakening of public affairs programming, wages, the lack of real power for women, viewer response, writing good shows, current issues being addressed on television shows, women trying to have an impact, the links between television and other industries, radio funding, career advancement via the buddy system, and organizing for change. A list of the 1984 Broadcast Award winners and other seminar participants is also provided. (EW)

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The Status of Women in the Broadcasting Industry

A Symposium

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THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY TODAY

A SYMPOSIUM

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Preface

Since its inception in 1977, a major concern of the National Commission on Working Women has been the image of women in the media. Recognizing the power of television to influence attitudes and behavior, the Commission has developed projects to critique television shows, reward outstanding programming, and study the employment of women and minorities in the industry.

Our first project, the Women at Work Broadcast Awards competition, was created in 1979 to reward the nation's best television and radio programs on working women's issues. Since then, we have judged over 1,300 entries and presented over 125 awards to outstanding shows covering such issues as child care, sexual harassment, pay discrimination, and women in nontraditional jobs. Winners over the past six years have included producers, reporters, and writers from TV and radio stations across the country.

In 1982 the Commission began to analyze the image of women on the new fall TV programs. These annual surveys have looked at female characters' race, age, occupation, marital status and more, in an effort to determine television's portrayal of women. They have also compared female TV characters to real life women.

The Commission's most recent report, which critiqued the 1984 TV season, found some significant changes over previous years. For example, in 1984 there were more female characters, more minorities, new family structures, job diversity, new roles for men, and a focus on issues of concern to women. Although still far from perfect, the 1984 television season provided some progress for women.

In 1984 the Commission added a third media project, which is the subject of this report. In order to determine the status of women in broadcasting and to measure the effects of affirmative action in hiring and promotions, the Commission sponsored an afternoon symposium for Broadcast Awards winners to discuss these issues. This report contains that discussion, as well as the panelists' exchange with the audience. Listed at the back of the report are the 1984 Broadcast Awards winners.

Introduction

On December 5, 1984, the National Commission on Working Women held its sixth annual Women at Work Broadcast Awards ceremony to honor the nation's best programming on working women. Twenty-eight winners from across the country accepted their awards at a luncheon program in Washington, DC.

That same day, the winners participated in a symposium moderated by Commissioner Maureen Bunyan, local news anchor of the CBS affiliate, WDVM-TV. The symposium, "An Inside Look at the Broadcasting Industry," was a discussion among panel members of such issues as employment, programming, and funding. The winners panel consisted of reporters, producers, and writers from television and radio, from public and commercial stations, from large and small markets, and from the networks and Hollywood production companies. In the audience were heads of women's organizations, representatives from corporations, labor unions, education and public interest groups, as well as broadcasters.

For 90 minutes there was a lively discussion among the symposium panelists and a candid exchange with the audience. To encourage frankness and candor, all comments and remarks by symposium participants were off-the-record. Panel and audience members were notified at the beginning of the session that the Commission was taping the proceedings for a report on the status of women in the broadcasting industry, to be published in the spring.

This is that paper. The proceedings have been edited for purposes of brevity and clarity. Otherwise, the panelist and audience remarks are as they were spoken that afternoon. The Commission publishes this paper with the view that "inside experts" -- who are not only talented professionals but also people committed to the rights of women and minorities -- have provided a significant evaluation and analysis of one of the most powerful industries in our country. Although the 90-minute seminar did not provide time for answers to problems, it did raise provocative questions which should both disturb and encourage those involved in the issues of women in broadcasting today.

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY TODAY

A SYMPOSIUM

EMPLOYMENT AND FUNDING

MODERATOR: This year's report on the image of women on TV by the Commission shows an increase of women characters on television programs. But there still remains a great problem in the area of employment. My question is: What is the employment status of women in the industry today compared with 10 years ago?

PANELIST: When I first started in this business, I think I expected to confront more racism than sexism, but the opposite has been true, probably because racism is still more subtle in its methods. People are not afraid to call you "girl" whereas they might be afraid to make some kind of racial comment. But luckily, I haven't confronted serious problems in terms of being able to do the kinds of stories I've wanted to do.

I try to encourage young women to seriously consider the many behind-the-scenes jobs in broadcasting -- those jobs are still being overlooked by many young people wanting to enter the industry. We have a few women camera people at my station; we have a few in audio, but no directors and too few in sales. What we need is more than "window dressing." Although there are women in front of the camera, it's still important to push for equality in all job slots: anchors, management, technical.

It's also a two-way street. Women must speak up and get involved in the kinds of stories they want to cover.

PANELIST: I'd like to speak about radio. I was the first woman talk show host about six years ago in my state; now that I've moved, there are none. I think across the country, you can count the entire number of women radio talk show hosts on one or two hands . . . and they are usually psychologists, sex therapists, or religious people.

Even though women have made their way into television on interview programs, radio, which is really a very intimate vehicle for women, doesn't hire us, so that it's almost impossible for women to call up and talk to other women. But they will let men on the air.

The same guys who told me years ago not to talk about women's issues are now doing that on talk shows.

lack of women hosting radio talk shows

I'm not sure why there aren't more women on these radio programs. Maybe there's a prejudice against women speaking forthrightly about issues. There are so many radio talk show hosts who say the most outrageous, incredible things. They yell at people, they're racist, they're abrasive . . . and yet for women to get on the air and take strong stands . . . they just won't hire us. It's a shame because there are so many exciting people to talk to and it's possible to do in-depth interviews because radio is so cheap.

Women on radio today are limited mainly to sex and physical fitness. It hasn't really changed since I started, and that's very frustrating. I don't know where we must go for our voices to be heard, to talk about things of importance, to interview people and say controversial things without having "the guys" reinterpret it.

PANELIST: I now work for a radio operation. There are very few women doing on-air spots, only about 10%. I'm not sure what the problem is since I think management is sensitive to this.

I think there's still a strong bias of people against women in authority, which may be why we don't have many women radio talk show hosts in some markets.

PANELIST: I don't think it's just men's perception of women in power, it's women's, too. It wasn't a man who said Geraldine Ferraro rhymed with "rich," it was a woman. And I think that's a problem that's a lot bigger than just the men in power or the men who work under the women in power. I think it's a sociological thing.

MODERATOR: In the broadcasting industry, it is predominantly men who are making the decisions about who is hired and who is fired. Some of the younger men may have grown up in television with women around them, while some of the older men may not have been surrounded by women reporters, writers, etc. What do you find are the attitudes of the men for whom you work today? Are their attitudes much different than they were 10 years ago? Are they essentially the same but the men are a little more withdrawn about their comments? Or would you say that the men you work for are more liberal and more supportive of women in the industry?

PANELIST: I have an interesting observation. I work for a small market station that's essentially a training station. A lot of people get jobs there without experience.

A few years ago I was being trained to be a director and I felt a real lack of criticism. Then I realized what was happening. A lot of the men directors who were training me were getting together and were saying, "Well, how will we tell her that this was no good?" I don't know if they thought I was going to cry or what, but I've observed the same thing with other women coming up the ranks. The male directors have no problem going in and telling a guy, "What you did was terrible," but when it's a woman, you feel a real lack of criticism. Then, when a promotion comes up, you're not considered because you haven't improved. Interesting phenomenon . . . not putting women down, but not helping them get ahead, either.

PANELIST: We have to decide as women -- not just inside the walls of television, but in people we support as elected officials -- what's good for us. And that's when the change will come.

I think the jobs of community relations managers are on the line because of deregulation, although the evidence is still anecdotal. In the future they may no longer be at TV stations.

In taking the broader view, though, I still see racism and sexism in the industry. If you don't belong to the inner circle, you don't count.

weakening of public affairs

PANELIST: That's an interesting point, and it's something that nobody is addressing very much. I don't know how many people in the audience belong to community groups or activist organizations that have constituencies, but let me tell you something. Everything is changing. There is only anecdotal evidence at this point, no hard data, but some markets, especially some in radio, are cutting their public affairs or community affairs managers. It doesn't mean that the stations will no longer do community affairs programming. But what it does mean is that programming will be done without the eye of someone knowledgeable about the community, who knows the local public.

It's important for you in your groups to hold seminars, to pay attention to this, and send letters to the community affairs managers at your local stations,

who then can go to the boss and say, "The public out there wants their time. They don't want any erosion of public affairs programming." There's a lack of information, an innocence about this issue that bothers me very much.

PANELIST: The erosion has already started in radio. The news departments that only had two or three people now have one; where they used to do three minutes of news, they now do 30 seconds, so that's already happened. If nobody complains, it will continue.

PANELIST: There's another aspect of broadcasting that's a bit more hopeful, although it doesn't have a lot of money. That's community radio. I got to be a manager because of my productions. People saw I was getting awards like these, and so I got encouraged to be a manager of a non-commercial community radio station. There are about 60 of them in the country, and they're controlled by the people in the community. Women are very much represented at these stations and, in many cases, are in control of them. For the past year, I've pretty much put aside my productions in order to put a new station on the air. And we're changing images and stereotypes. The problem for me, as a producer and manager who's not in commercial radio, is earning regular money.

PANELIST: What we need to talk about is women earning decent wages. I have seen some changes in the past 10 years. It used to be that if you wanted to get into production, you went in as a secretary. Now, more and more women are going right into the technical end. But they're getting the jobs and the breaks mainly in non-union houses, rather than union ones. The hiring record of union houses is not very impressive. So that's where we have to look for change.

decent wages

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: It looks like when broadcasting legislation is revised, there might be a strengthening of equal opportunity (EEO) regulation in terms of women and minorities. Women are doing very well in broadcasting generally; they're moving in quite strongly. About 36-40% of employees in the top four categories in broadcasting are non-minority women.

One big problem, which I know we can't discuss today, is the gradual erosion of the black male in broadcasting. Black females are at about the same levels as two years ago; they are moving into the ranks of management and sales. And white women are moving up

very high. In fact, the one network that's doing the best on moving women into management is NBC.

MODERATOR: I believe that no matter how powerful the female anchor is in terms of image or reporting ability or popularity in the community . . . when she's on the air she must be constantly sensitive to the time she gets, to how much she gets to alternate the opening and closing of the shows, to how much time she has reading on the air, and to the kind of work she actually gets to do, because all of this has an impact on the viewer.

I think there is greater sensitivity toward hiring women on the air and in production and sales and administration. However, we do live in an extremely racist and sexist society, and "window dressing" is just that. Women and minorities can appear to be powerful, and in fact, have absolutely no power behind them. When you go to a TV station board meeting or management team meeting, you will probably see white men, and no diversity in terms of race and gender. In some sense, women and minorities are still in the stage of being used by the industry. I think we're beginning to be sensitive to this and are beginning to learn the skills needed so that we can positively use the industry to our benefit and to theirs, too. As the sensitivity increases, so does the power and willingness to make change.

lack of real power

PANELIST: I want to go back to the comment about the increased numbers of women in management and their strength in the fields of cable. When you look at their pay scales, there may be women in all these management positions in cable, but the cable industry pays nothing. So, in effect, these women are rising up, but they're poor. There's still a huge change needed because women are not in financially powerful positions; they're not controlling the production pots of money.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: This industry is changing a great deal. It's no longer just broadcasting, cable, film and music . . . it is all one. We must begin to understand the interrelatedness of these industries because many of us are going to be displaced or removed, and we've got to be able to move from one branch of the industry to another. We can't plan to have just one career any more. We've got to be able to move around.

PANELIST: In order for viewers to effect change, they need to hit either the station or the advertiser. Sometimes you win and sometimes you don't. It's extremely important to let the station know when you see something you like and when you see something you don't like.

viewer response

Sometimes I get phone calls after I've done a story, and I tell them I appreciate the phone call, but ask them to please also write a letter. If you want to have a bigger effect, put it in writing.

PANELIST: The networks weight each letter. They say that one letter represents so many thousand viewers. A letter has a lot of power.

PANELIST: Where I work, we have regular meetings where we outline what we've done, what's being planned. I can't begin to tell you how many times I've been raked over the coals because of a listener phone call or letter about a story of mine. My boss brings pressure on me and I have to make sure it's taken care of. So it is real important.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: It's encouraging to hear you say that because when you do write, it takes so long to get a response, that it seems your point hasn't mattered at all. It's frustrating. And then when you do get a response, it's a standard form letter. So you think you've made no impact.

PANELIST: They keep a tally. They really do. The networks have a whole department that charts all the responses, weights the letters, and counts who liked or didn't like whatever.

PROGRAMMING

MODERATOR: This discussion will segue us into our next area, that of programming. What you've just heard is very true. People do respond to what they see on television, and the audience does have an impact on what is broadcast through letters and phone calls. That cannot be discounted as a power in terms of what kinds of news and entertainment programs you're going to see.

current issues

Here's my question: What do you think are the current hot issues surrounding women, whether it's news, public affairs, or entertainment? What is currently in vogue? We know we go through phases -- what are you putting on the air now that is getting attention and why do you think it's getting attention? Furthermore, what would you like to see on the air, if you're not happy with what you do see or hear now?

PANELIST: What gets on the air and is getting a lot of attention right now is sexual abuse. What's disturbing

about some of the coverage is that it takes people's minds off the real issue, which is, who will take care of our kids. Most people have to work, even when the alternatives aren't good.

There's been a lot of media attention in the last year on child sexual abuse, but behind it are the problems families face when they have to work, as most of us do, and they have children who need good care. Sexual abuse is very titillating, which is why I think the media loves it, but we need to talk about the related issues of maternity leave and policy, which people in this country don't even want to discuss. We just want women to work and don't want to face the fact of what happens when they have children. When they need to take a break to have their children, they don't have many choices. Maybe they can use accumulated vacation time . . . or perhaps they do have a maternity leave policy, but most of those policies simply specify that their job will be held for six weeks while they take unpaid leave. I think these are the really pressing issues.

PANELIST: I think the sexual abuse issue comes after the domestic violence issue as a media fad. My job now is looking for funding for my station. The private foundations I talk to are focused pretty much on funding sexual abuse. Maybe this is good because a lot of the programming about these topics has allowed stations to explore these women's issues.

PANELIST: I think it's important that the attention is there because now parents feel that's something they should talk to their children about at a young age.

MODERATOR: In the process of making decisions about what is programmed into an entertainment show, how do producers decide what subject areas might be the focus of a particular episode? Do they read the newspapers and pick an issue that's hot in the press? Do they consult with you? Do they take audience polls? What goes into the decision about the entertainment programming that we see?

writing good shows

PANELIST: I do something that writers have told me is somewhat unique. When a writer comes in to pitch a show, I say I want them to tell me about something they care about passionately, whatever it is. Don't give me the log line for TV Guide. Tell me something you care about and we'll figure out a show about that. If they have no commitment or passion about anything, then they're not writers I want to work with. Sometimes

it's hard to do this and we do end up with the "issue-of-the-week," but I really love to get writers who care deeply about something and then go from there. It doesn't have to be a social issue, it can be compulsion or jealousy, as long as they have something they want to say and there's a point of view about it.

MODERATOR: Who are your writers? What kind of people are they?

PANELIST: They're everybody. We use a lot of women. Very often, I prefer the sensibility of women writers, but I will read any script. I read them along with the other two male producers on the show, and that process is pretty blind. We just read the scripts and don't know who the writers are. If they're good scripts, we have the people in. What we're most proud of is that we've used a lot of people who've never had anything produced before. The "old, reliable" writers, I've found, can be kind of hacked out; you really do burn out and lose your passion. So we use a lot of new writers.

PANELIST: In all the years that I've been on the air, I've seen a lot of trends and types of sensibilities in writers -- they come and go.

issues on situation comedies

In one of the first episodes we did after the pilot of my show, which was about the characters becoming a family, a woman who was on her own for the first time in her life, unskilled, who had a dream but there was nothing in the near future to indicate she would get that dream, with a son and all kinds of potential to explore the humanity of that situation . . . the first episode was me dressed as a hamburger with a pickle on my head. And this was after the tenderness of the pilot!

So you begin to learn how to collaborate. I looked at the issue -- in this case being dressed as a hamburger and a bun -- and suddenly you're mobilized to make this episode be <u>about</u> something so that you can survive the week with dignity. Suddenly, it occurred to me that this episode <u>is</u> about something, it's about desperation . . . an emotion everyone feels, both in show business and in life. So I began to work with the writers to find some dignity in terms of the baseness my character felt at being dressed as a hamburger. So the episode turned out to fit the character, who had a dream and wanted to be a star. She thought she would sing in a hamburger commercial and make some money to raise her kid. For that episode, I

wrote my first scene -- I'd never written anything before. And it worked.

I'm excited by the Commission's report this year but in the nine years I've been on my show, I don't think we've come very far. My character is about to get a new love interest on the show. The script that was just passed in to me indicates that we've come nowhere in terms of what a grown woman in her 40s wants for herself in terms of romance and a relationship. My character has really been blocked from exploring these things -- she's only had two dates in nine years!

Who makes these decisions? It's a pass-the-buck situation. It's possible the network makes the decision -- once the show is a success -- and my show is a farce -- then they say, "The audience doesn't want to see that," about anything more substantial.

It's taken us nine years to get a story on my sit-com about teenage alcoholism. And this boy with the drinking problem is a recurring character, so the question is, what are we going to do about him next week? Are we going to cure him? The network got nervous, and rightfully so. No, we said, let's look to ourselves and the people we know for answers. Do people get cured in a half hour? What's the reality of this? Well, the reality is that you have to get help. And so that was not easily done, but it did come about.

I get dignity and affirmation from events like this and the Commission's annual Broadcast Awards. So I go back reaffirmed and say, this is what we need to do. We need to tell the truth about women's lives.

Just one more thing: the trends do swing back and forth. This week, sexual abuse and incest are hot. When there's a satiation with those issues, and there will be soon, we will move on to something else. A few years ago, I tried to sell the networks a story on parent abuse. It's a prevalent, closeted, horrifying issue. However, I just couldn't sell it to the networks -- they said, "Forget it." But now I look around and see female abuse get coverage and I think, maybe this is the time.

A few years ago the network line was, "Incest doesn't get numbers, music doesn't get numbers, period pieces don't get numbers . . ." It's just a matter of hanging in.

Everything is political -- it's what will sell. Whatever the popular issue of the day, they'll get three stories out of it and then it will stop selling, and somebody else will come up with other ideas. And then all of a sudden, all of those ideas which I and others couldn't sell as movies-for-television are now popular.

MODERATOR: Don't you think that the "passing-the-buck" philosophy can also be looked at in a positive way?

having an impact

While everyone else is busy passing the buck, you can be grabbing it and having an impact. If nobody wants to take responsibility, then you can go ahead and do it and have an impact. I think that's what you have done. I think that's what a lot of women do, especially in programming.

PANELIST: They do, and it really works. You go in and say, "I'm really committed and I'm going to do a great job because I care." I think that most people in this business -- at the networks or at the producer level -- are not venal, are not out to get you; they're lazy, they want their job to be easy. They want you to do it and do it well, so they don't have to redo it. They want you to go in and convince them "I am so fabulous, your job is going to be easy." That's all they want to know. That's the bottom line.

PANELIST: I once had an assistant news director tell me, "There is no energy like a correspondent who wants to convince me he's got a good story." And I think that's true. When someone comes in to me and says, "We have to do this story; I can deliver," then I'm likely to be on his side and to push for him.

PANELIST: Sure. You don't want to have to rewrite it if it's not good. That's my job. If a writer doesn't come through, I have to rewrite it and I don't get a weekend. So I want writers to come in, convince me they feel strongly and know what they're doing . . . and I'll hire them.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: I'm a working woman who's been affiliated with a union for over 30 years. I'm also a mother, a wife, and a grandmother. I mention all of this because it's important. All of the issues that have been raised in this seminar so far -- and I've been jotting them down -- are the same issues raised by working women in the 80% whom this Commission represents, and I work with those women on a daily basis.

You talk about an erosion of progressive public policy, about stereotyping, about a return of racism and sexism because it has been legitimatized by the political climate we find ourselves in . . . it's all happening. In the work force you have a lot of women secretaries but not many managers; too few in craft positions but a lot in bookkeeping. Someone in the audience mentioned the need to train for other jobs. We need to do that too because plants are closing, we see the introduction of computer equipment which is affecting employment and creating new ghettoes for women workers . . . so we are attempting to make sure that women are a part of any new training that comes along.

Knowing your rights is also important. Many women workers don't know their own rights, either under the union contract or under the law. This becomes extremely important when you get to questions of promotions and hiring.

links between TV and other industries

I raise these issues because it is so important to have a seminar like this. We're learning about an industry that many of us are removed from. But what is rewarding is that there is a similarity between our strategies and yours. Maybe we can translate some of those strategies so they can be used in other industries, like your own.

One thing I was so pleased to hear was your comment about programming . . . to be able to have some input in programming, even though you might have to sacrifice your own position in some way . . . to use your image to raise issues important to women is good. I would like to see greater interaction, where writers would come to you and you could say, "No, that doesn't fit." Issues like sexual abuse are important . . . but they are related to sexual harassment which is also important -- and what about things like maternity leave? These are all powerful economic issues that keep women from moving up, and treatment of them in a worthwhile way is helpful to us all.

PANELIST: I'd like to go one step further with issues. It seems that too often on television you have either the "content-less" program, fluffy shows, or you have "The Issue." There's a lot more that can be done with images of people on TV. When a woman appears in a series on TV, she doesn't have to be a "woman cop," or a a "woman lawyer," or a "lady doctor." She could just appear and do the role, the same as a man would do. A handicapped colleague of mine is tired of only seeing disabled people on television as "the handicapped

person." They're never just a lawyer or doctor in a regular role. It's hard for writers and producers to see beyond the stereotypes.

PANELIST: I think it even goes beyond that. It has to do with a different way of viewing the world. I hope that when the characters on my show have a fight, we show that people can fight and disagree, but they don't slug it out and we don't tell viewers at the end of the show who's right and who's wrong. In spite of yelling, the characters still like each other. To me, that's even more important . . . I do want to shine a light on all the issues, but I also want to look at the world in a slightly different, more humanistic way. It isn't who can yell the loudest or hit the hardest or blow you away the fastest with a gun . . . there is a way to live a decent life, to work things out with compassion and understanding, and that can be both dramatic and interesting.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: I'd just like to make a small comment. There's one thing that has to be looked at. There's a fundamental difference between talking about employment conditions and having real control. Stockholders have real control; so do owners. Until women and minorities are able to make independent decisions about their own productions and place their products in the marketplace so that their companies can compete with others, then much of these concerns will go on in an endless circle, for they depend on someone else's generosity to resolve them.

real control

MODERATOR: You've hit on a very important subject: the ability of us all to produce on our own and, as you say, to place our product in the market in a competitive way. Those of you who work for independent companies or have your own, know the power and authority that that brings. I think you also know the pain that brings when you cannot compete or cannot be paid properly.

I wish we could go into a much deeper discussion of this. We have reached our time limit, unfortunately. Does anybody have any last minute comments they'd like to make?

PANELIST: I'd like to make a footnote to what you were saying. I don't know what the Commission does in terms of what we are all saying, what the priorities are or whatever. But I think it would be wonderful if one small thing could happen.

There are a lot of granting agencies that have allowed me and many other people on the community level to produce for community and public radio, and they have survived on the good graces of grants from corporations. But not many grants from corporations are to fund radio programs. It's just very difficult to get funding for radio. And so I'd ask you to help us raise the consciousness of corporations. Radio is cheap and it's fast. The issues of sexual abuse, incest and all those other issues were being talked about on the radio 10 years ago. And in a very real, exciting way and on the community level.

radio funding

There's so much that's exciting that's going on right now, and it's not going to hit television for many years. And we should be able to hear it on radio.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: But television is so powerful and in many ways, video is really what's happening, unfortunately. I just want to say one thing quickly. While we do things in Washington legislatively and you panelists are on the creative end, I think it's important from a pragmatic point of view to talk about how Hollywood really operates. It's a very incestuous community. And I don't mean that negatively. Those who get ahead generally are those who know other people. It's not so much of a racist or really even an entirely sexist community the way decisions are made . . . it is basically a who-you-know and who-you-associate-with type of community. That being the case, I think it's important that women, and non-minority women especially, have managed to enter into the various communities and confines of Hollywood. But, unfortunately, minority women have not really gotten into those positions. What has to happen is that those few minority women who do have the eyes and ears of the guys at the top . . . they have to bring along a few women in a sort of buddy system.

the buddy system

There's a black program executive at a network who's helped other producers. There's been nothing legislative but just the buddy system and it's worked. It's all bound in who you know. We need more people in those positions -- more in the Writers Guild and on and on. We must get to know people and understand how the business really works. I can't underscore that enough.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: I'd like to add a perspective as I wind up. There have been many comments made about how far we have or have not come in the last six or seven years or more. I'd like to take us back another decade

for perspective. I'd like to go back to the 1950s. It's hard to imagine a single thing that's happening today back in the 50s. And I think the reason for that is that we have become organized. We have gotten together in various groups -- women's groups, civil rights groups. None of them existed, except in small measure, in the 1950s.

But, perhaps most important of all, we had no communications system among us back then. We couldn't get ourselves together to do this, to influence the media, to do anything. I'm as discouraged as anybody when I see what's happened in the last few years, but I think we have to take a longer view, because these are big problems. We have to stick with things, like the Commission's Broadcast Awards, which has been going on for six years now. The winners who come each year are inspired to go back and do good work. And we've all been working on our issues for the last umpteen years and we've been inspired too. But we've got to remember . . . all of our progress can disappear if we don't keep ourselves together. We've got to work with community organizations and get them together with the media organizations. I, in particular, want to thank the Commission for being a leader in starting that process.

organizing for change

MODERATOR: Thank you. Well put. I'd like to thank you all for contributing to our discussion. I think we've had great grist for the mill and I think we've also been encouraged by what we've heard. So let's go back, take the positive and multiply it many, many times. Thank you very much.

1984 BROADCAST AWARDS WINNERS AND PARTICIPANTS

Jennifer Abod, WGBH-FM, Boston, MA.

Gil Amundson, WTCN-TV, Minneapolis, MN.

Gail Anderson, WHA-TV, Madison, WI.

Susan Anderson, WBBM-TV, Chicago, IL.

Kathryn Aparicio, California Times, Mill Valley, CA.

Harriet Baskas, Reel Women Productions, Portland, OR.

Deborah Bond, University of Alabama Television Services, University, AL.

Jeanne Bowers, WDVM-TV, Washington, DC.

Maureen Bunyan, WDVM-TV, Washington, DC.

Pam Burke, ABC Cable Television, New York, NY.

Bob Clark, WTCN-TV, Minneapolis, MN.

Louise Cleveland, National Public Radio, Washington, DC.

Donna Faw, Maryland Public Television, Owings Mills, MD.

Joseph Feury, NBC Television Network, New York, NY.

Trudy Gallant, WTVS-TV, Detroit, MI.

Emil Gallina, National Catholic Broadcast News, Washington, DC.

Deborah George, National Public Radio, Washington, DC.

Madelyn Goldberg, ABC Cable Television, New York, NY.

Thomas Goodwin, State of the Art, Washington, DC.

Lee Grant, NBC Television Network, New York, NY.

Linda Lavin, Warner Brothers Television, Burbank, CA.

Peter Lefcourt, CBS Television Network, New York, NY.

Dorie Lenz, WPHL-TV, Philadelphia, PA.

Mike Lundberg, WTCN-TV, Minneapolis, MN.

Kevin Magee, ABC Radio, New York, NY.

Warren Martin, WTCN-TV, Minneapolis, MN.

Nanci McGraw, KXOA-AM and FM, Sacramento, CA.

Susan Merigan, WKZO-TV, Kalamazoo, MI.

Abigail Myers, WCBS-TV, New York, NY.

Carol Pearson, National Catholic Broadcast News, Washington, DC.

Michelle Pettit, WTLC-FM, Indianapolis, IN.

Carol M. Rosenbaum, WTVD-TV, Durham, NC.

Mimi Rothman, NBC Television Network, New York, NY.

Max Shores, University of Alabama Television Services, University, AL.

Anna Mae Sokusky, CBS Radio Stations News Service, Washington, DC.

Betty Thomas, MTM Television, Studio City, CA.

Phil Watson, KCBS-TV, Los Angeles, CA.

Working Woman Magazine in conjunction with Dan Lombardo, Inc., New York, NY.

Gerardine Wurzburg, State of the Art, Washington, DC.

Mary Beth Yarrow, NBC Television Network, New York, NY.

Carolyn Young, KOIN-TV, Portland, OR.